

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lebashay seized the loose
and of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction,
and the group followed. When he entered a house, he
re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete de-
tail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay
prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying
3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up,
roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the nor-
mal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man",
and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or
compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave.
The boy would approach every individual, make magic con-
tact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as
the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the
lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly
dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across,
since water was believed to draw away the power from
the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water
did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be
drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believ-
ed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor
Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth\$6.-;
the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to
guarantee that he would return the stolen item and ap-
pear in court. The lebashay could decide to accept
these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay,
it was the responsibility of the victim who had original-
ly requested his services to pay him on the spot, and
try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect
of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting
this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless
when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection.
Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who
were known to have evaded detection, were and are be-
lieved to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from
a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the
nearest "tānkwa", a practitioner of black magic, and ask
him to divine by throwing his bones. This, too, is
now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly
as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to
the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "sābātē
masdāfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to
the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thiefseeker who al-
so tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem
of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

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Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wāsān gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

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More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled

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to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendant he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

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Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the am-

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddina" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adagaddaga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shamas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[41] To parry blows - "nakkata" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adagaddaga" (see above); knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "sezeq labtasa" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "ruta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("natala") may be rolled around the head - "tanattana". Hence, the turban of priests is called "tantanamiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "dabtara" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shabash-haba"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[65] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukara" boast dance).

201 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into
291 disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as
178 "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping
685 the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

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longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

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Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the sar cult, the victory dance ("kurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the sar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoeic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qārto").

"Yebahalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wardaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Ababa" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

(MANZ)

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*175 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa,
643 where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagässi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagässi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

*175 The Manzē Eshos

185 The goals of Nagässi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are
[181] ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rist*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone
181 who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents
[428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your
[539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

Ya-Manz rist be-shi amatu/la-bälabētu.

Manz *rist* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be

• [685] punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged

[691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

81 / *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war.

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273*The Good Life*

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablās* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance.

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In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbē*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin."

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The concept of *sarto mablās* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabas*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days.

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Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."¹³ Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more